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## Show and tell— Responsible Wood leads two successful field trips

COVER STORY P 2



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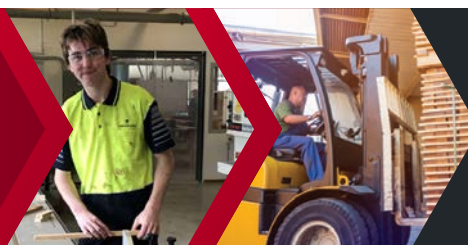
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# Western Australia showcases the future of sustainable timber construction

Responsible Wood collaborates for important educational field trips.

TWO highly successful field trips held in Perth and Bunbury have brought to life the story of certified sustainable forest management and ethical and responsible supply chains in Western Australia. Organised through a collaboration between

Responsible Wood, Wesbeam, Wespine, Forest Products Commission (FPC), South West Timber Hub, WoodSolutions, and the University of Tasmania, the tours offered participants a unique, hands-on experience in understanding the sustainability credentials and carbon benefits of timber.

Attended by architects, designers, engineers, builders, carpenters, retailers, academics, and policy makers, the field trips showcased the full journey of responsibly sourced timber—from the forest to engineered

wood products, and finally, into award-winning buildings.

"This initiative is about showing, not just telling," said Matt de Jongh, Sustainability Manager at Responsible Wood. "Participants could walk through sustainably managed forests, observe certified harvesting operations, and then see how that timber is transformed into high-performance building materials and used in some of WA's most innovative timber buildings."

The Perth leg included a visit to Boola Katitjin, the

stunning new timber building at Murdoch University. Designed to meet the Green Building Council's 6 Star Green Star Design and As-Built v1.3 rating, Boola Katitjin pushes the boundaries of environmentally conscious design. Constructed from engineered timber products and employing natural ventilation, the building is a shining example of biophilic design and low-carbon construction.

"The Boola Katitjin project is proof that constructing large scale, culturally

significant buildings in timber isn't just possible—in many cases it's preferable," said Jon Shanks, Industry Associate Professor in Timber Design at the University of Tasmania. "It demonstrates what can be achieved when design excellence and sustainable material sourcing come together."

Greg Nolan, Director of the University of Tasmania's Centre for Sustainable Architecture with Wood, added: "There's increasing recognition of the role



1/ The production process of laminated veneer lumber (LVL) at Wesbeam.



2/ Observing the use of technology in the production of LVL at Wesbeam. Photos: Wesbeam

Cont P 3



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From P 2

timber can play in reducing carbon emission from the built environment. Timber stores atmospheric carbon and its use avoids the higher carbon emissions associated with alternative materials. These field trips give professionals direct exposure to the solutions already in practice."

In Bunbury, attendees toured the Dardanup Shire Administration Building, another standout example of sustainable timber architecture, which features certified timber products throughout its structure and interior finishes.

The field trips also included visits to Wesbeam's laminated veneer lumber (LVL) facility and Wespine's sawmill operations, where visitors could observe the production of engineered wood products certified under the Responsible Wood scheme.

"Seeing the level of innovation and quality control in the manufacture

of LVL impressed many of the visitors," said James Malone, CEO at Wesbeam. "We're proud to be part of a responsible supply chain delivering high-performance, low-carbon building solutions."

Brad Barr, Resource Manager of Wespine, echoed this sentiment: "The tour gave participants insight into how our operations are geared towards sustainability—from the raw material sourced from certified forests, to efficient processing that maximises yield and reduces waste."

The field trips also

included visits to forests managed by the Forest Products Commission (FPC). "We were able to demonstrate the importance of certified sustainable forest management practices and how these underpin the long-term viability of our forest assets," said John Tredinnick, Deputy Chief Executive Operations of the FPC.

The events were coordinated with support from the South West Timber Hub, a key driver of regional timber industry development. "These trips are about education and connection," said Wendy

Perdon, South West Timber Hub Manager. "They help build trust and understanding between the people managing the forests, those processing the timber, and the designers specifying it in construction."

Kevin Peachey, Head of Built Environment Programs at WoodSolutions, summed up the broader significance of the initiative: "By bringing stakeholders

together across the entire value chain, we're building a community of practice committed to climate-smart construction. Timber isn't just part of the solution—it's leading the way."

The success of the Perth and Bunbury field trips underscores the growing momentum behind certified timber and its role in a low-carbon, renewable future for Australia's built environment.

**On the cover: Field trip attendees at a Forest Products Commission managed forest.**

Image: Responsible Wood



1/ Field trip attendees on a guided tour inspecting the Boola Katitjin building at Murdoch University, Perth.

2/ Examining sawlogs at the Wespine sawmill site. Images: Responsible Wood



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Responsible Wood and PEFC Australia & New Zealand are calling on stakeholders to:

- Complete a short survey to inform future initiatives, communications and system improvements.
- Nominate for our Standards Committees and contribute to the next review of AS/NZS 4708.



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# Ongoing partnership supports regional biodiversity projects

ONEFORTYONE and Nature Glenelg Trust are excited to announce the continuation of their successful partnership with a renewed commitment of \$50,000 for the upcoming year.

This partnership, which began in 2013, has been instrumental in supporting various biodiversity and conservation projects in the region.

OneFortyOne General Manager Forests, Deon Kriek, said that over the years, OneFortyOne and Nature Glenelg Trust have collaborated on numerous initiatives aimed at restoring and preserving natural habitats.

"One of the flagship projects of this partnership is the Mt Burr Swamp Restoration Reserve," Deon said.

"With support including number of other contributors, this 300-hectare site has been transformed from drained agricultural land into a thriving ecosystem."

Deon also highlighted the importance of the collaboration.

"We are proud to support Nature Glenelg Trust in their mission to restore the environment in our region," Deon said.

"Our partnership reflects our shared values and commitment to environmental stewardship."

The renewed funding will



**OneFortyOne Planning and Compliance Manager, Janeth Mackenzie, with Nature Glenelg Trust Senior Ecologist, Bryan Haywood, at the Mt Burr Swamp.** Photo: OneFortyOne

and Silver Xenica butterfly as well as a native grassland assessment and burning program in collaboration with Burrandies.

Managing Director / Founder of Nature Glenelg Trust, Mark Bachmann, expressed his enthusiasm for the continued

partnership. "The support from OneFortyOne has been a great contribution to our efforts to restore and protect critical habitats," Mark said. "This renewed commitment will allow us to build on the great work we've done so far."

continue to support further restoration efforts at Mt Burr Swamp, education facilities, and contribute to the NGT Foundation. Partnership funding has also underpinned a number of small regional biodiversity projects to support the Southern Brown bandicoot, Eared worm lizard,

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# AKD to acquire Highland Pine Products

AKD, a proud Australian forestry and timber processing company is pleased to confirm that it will acquire Pentarch Forestry's 50% shareholding of Highland Pine Products Pty Ltd (HPP).

HPP is currently a 50:50 joint venture business owned by AKD and Pentarch Forestry, with the primary asset being the Oberon sawmill. The sawmill processes over 500,000 m<sup>3</sup> of plantation grown sawlogs and produces a range of structural, landscape and packaging products.

Post this acquisition, AKD will process nearly 2,000,000 m<sup>3</sup> of sawlog per annum, producing over 1,000,000 m<sup>3</sup> of timber from the Colac, Caboolture, Oberon, Tumut and Yarram sawmills.

Commenting on the acquisition, AKD's Chief Executive Officer, Shane Vicary



**AKD is excited to confirm it will acquire the remaining 50% of Highland Pine Products, taking full ownership of the Oberon, NSW business and welcoming them into the AKD team.** . Photo: AKD

said, "the Oberon acquisition is consistent with AKD's focus on operating high quality, strategically located sawmills, and represents an opportunity to provide an improved supply and product range for customers and the broader timber supply chain.

As a joint venture partner in the business since 2018,

AKD has had an opportunity to work with the talented team in Oberon and see the opportunities that exist on the site and in the region and we are excited about the future.

We are looking forward to working directly with the Oberon team as we welcome them to the broader AKD business of over 1,000

employees. The acquisition enhances our ability to service both existing and new customers and we look forward to strengthening relationships with suppliers and continuing to provide a positive contribution to the Oberon community".

AKD would like to acknowledge and thank Pentarch for their positive and constructive contribution to the HPP partnership and wishes it success for the future.

The acquisition is consistent with AKD's approach of growth through a mix of strategic acquisition and capital investment and further highlights our 70-year commitment to the Australian timber and building industries by investing for the future.

Completion of the transaction is expected to occur on 1 July 2025.

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# AFPA supports industry training trial for critically needed skilled roles

THE Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) is proud to support a new two-year saw doctor and wood machinist pilot training trial aimed at boosting these much needed forestry sector skills for our workforce, Chief Executive Officer of AFPA, Diana Hallam said.

"There is a national shortage of saw technicians and wood machinists and it's critical that we have efficient, accessible and fit for purpose training to support these important specialised skills across both softwood and hardwood processing and manufacturing. Saw makers and repairers are not currently listed on the Core Skills and Occupation List (CSOL)," Diana Hallam said.

This pilot training trial will be delivered in conjunction with Timber Training Creswick and TAFE NSW with support from employers and the Australian Government's \$10 million Forestry Workforce Training Program being administered



**The trial aims to attract new Australian people into the skilled trades industry, particularly saw technicians and wood machinists.** Image: Shutterstock

by ForestWorks.

"Attracting new people into the industry begins at school and we hope that this pilot training trial can go some way to encouraging more young people to consider fulfilling careers in these specialised areas that are critical for timber manufacturing," Diana Hallam said.

ForestWorks CEO, Mike Radda said, "We're proud to be involved in this pilot training trial. We know saw

doctors and wood machinists are professions that are experiencing shortages of qualified personnel. It's important that we provide the required training here in Australia for people who want to undertake it – as a dual option with importing these skills from overseas."

"Australia's forestry and timber sector is Australia's 6th largest manufacturing sector, drives the housing sector, and the need for our products will

only get more important as the country and different industries look to decarbonise by using timber and wood-fibre. We need to attract more people to our growing sector to fill the variety of important vocations we need to function," Diana Hallam said.

"This trial aims to make it easier for regional businesses to employ, train and retain skilled tradespeople. We are working to carefully identify industry needs, and to test a practical and pragmatic training solution including exploring the advantages of on-site employee training. AFPA will work with expert RTOs and businesses, in different states to make sure training is tailored and fit for purpose.

"We are proud to be working in this space with trusted industry education partners and look forward to positive training outcomes and reduced skills shortages across the forestry and the timber sector," Diana Hallam concluded.

## Forest industries raise concerns over foreign pest

THE Australian Forest Products Association (AFPA) and Forest Industries Federation of Western Australia (FIFWA) are calling on the Western Australian Government to take immediate and further action against the Polyphagous Shot-Hole Borer (PSHB), a damaging tree pest that could seriously impact our forestry industry and destroy trees and ecosystems from local gardens to national parks – Australia-wide, AFPA Chief Executive Officer, Diana Hallam said.

The PSHB – first detected in WA in 2021 – is spreading



**Shotgun-like lesions on the tree bark and trunk at entry holes of the polyphagous shot hole bore.** Image: Shutterstock

through backyards, urban forests and native reserves across metropolitan Perth – killing trees. Eradication

and containment efforts need to be increased or it's a matter of time before it moves south of Perth to the

state's production forests, or potentially nation-wide, killing many iconic trees, decimating Australian backyards and impacting forestry. The only effective treatment known is tree or limb removal so the WA Government, along with the Commonwealth and other jurisdictions need to be on notice about the serious biosecurity risk this Borer presents. It would be a travesty if governments don't resource the PSHB response sufficiently.

Diana Hallam said, "AFPA and FIFWA have written

Cont P 7



## MAY

**30: NTHA SA/NT/WA State Awards – National Wine Centre, Adelaide.** Join us in celebrating the SA, NT & WA Timber and Hardware Industry. Contact Tahlia at [events@ntha.com.au](mailto:events@ntha.com.au)

## JUNE

**3: Woodsolutions Webinar – ONLINE EVENT. 11am - 12noon (AEST).** For more information and to register your attendance, visit <https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register>.

**20-22: Perth Home Show – Perth Convention and Exhibition Centre, Perth 10.00am - 5.00pm daily.** Explore hundreds of home related products, exclusive Show specials, attend free seminars, and gain insights from top Australian renovation and building experts. For more information and to book tickets, visit <https://homeshows.com.au/perth/>

**22-26: World Conference on Timber Engineering –**

**Brisbane.** WCTE is the world's leading scientific forum for the presentation of the latest technical and architectural solutions and innovations in timber construction. For more information visit <https://www.wcte2025.org/event/df0d5655-c16d-47df-b4a6-457a7dc63d96/wcte-2025>

**29-JULY 2: 5th International Conference on Timber Bridges – Rotorua, New Zealand.** The focus is on timber bridges and the current need for resilient infrastructure to support thriving communities. For more information and to register your interest, visit <https://ictb-conference.org/2025/>

**30: WoodSolutions Workshop "Timber in a carbon neutral environment" – Pridham Hall, Adelaide. 8.30am - 3.30pm.** Discover how timber is reshaping the future of sustainable construction. For more information and reserve your place visit <https://www.eventbrite.com.au/e/woodsolutions-workshop-timber-in-a-carbon-neutral-environment-tickets-1363725101489>

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## SEPTEMBER

**2-3: Timber Queensland Biennial Conference "Doing Timber Business in Queensland" – Brisbane.**

For more information, email [admin@timberqueensland.com.au](mailto:admin@timberqueensland.com.au)

## OCTOBER

**13-14: Timber Construct 2025 – Melbourne.** To register your interest, visit <https://timberconstruct.org/>

**20-22: International Woodchip and Biomass Seminar and Networking Event – Singapore.** For more information visit <https://danaevents.co.nz/2024singapore/home>

**20-23: Forestry Australia 2025 Conference – Adelaide Convention Centre, Adelaide.** The conference theme is 'Restoring forests and landscapes to

secure Australia's future' and aims to develop both local and national collaboration. For more details visit <https://www.forestry.org.au/2025-conference/>

**22-23: Melbourne Build 25 – MCEC, Melbourne.**

Victoria's largest construction and design show. For more details visit <https://melbournebuildexpo.com>

**23-24: Field Trip – Perth, WA.** (Follows on from the woodchip and biomass seminar in Singapore.) For more information visit <https://danaevents.co.nz/2025singapore/fieldtrip>

**24: GTTIA – The Barn, Mt Gambier, SA.** Nominations are now open for 2025 Green Triangle Timber Industry Awards. Nominate online: <https://gttia.com/nomination-form/> For full details on award categories and submission guidelines, visit: <https://gttia.com/2025-award-categories/>

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to the WA Government to ensure appropriate resources and actions are being put in place with respect to requirements under the national Emergency Plan Pest Response (EPPR) to combat this significant exotic tree pest in Perth. We don't want it spreading and impacting production forests in southern-

WA or potentially other parts of the country.

"This is not just WA's problem and we're acutely aware that measures to eradicate PSHB through the national emergency plant pest arrangements haven't been sufficient. If governments fail to up the ante and act decisively now, we risk setting a dangerous precedent. The cost of inaction won't just be

measured in trees lost, but also damage to ecosystems, biodiversity, communities and our ability to respond to future crises."

FIFWA CEO Adele Farina said, "In South Africa, the ongoing management costs associated with the PSHB are in the billions of dollars and we believe a national response may be warranted to contain the impact of this

pest. We urge WA and other governments to seriously consider the impact of this pest and act before the problem potentially gets out of control.

"We'll engage further with the WA Government, other state jurisdictions and the Commonwealth as required, in response to the PSHB threat and further immediate action on the issue."

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# How compliant are your workplace safety glasses?

WHEN it comes to workplace safety, protecting your employees' eyesight should be a top priority. Yet, many workers still risk their vision unnecessarily by using safety glasses that do not meet Australian standards.

Recent safety assessments emphasise the importance of making sure your workplace protective eyewear complies with the Australian/New Zealand Standard AS/NZS 1337.1:2010, which certifies medium impact protection.

Look for markings like 'AS/NZS 1337.1' on the lenses or frames to confirm compliance.



**The correct safety glasses are an essential part of Work Health and Safety when performing tasks that carry a risk to the eyes.** Image: Shutterstock

Non-compliant glasses can fail to withstand the challenges of the common workplace, leading to potentially serious injuries.

## A CRUCIAL CHOICE IN EYEWEAR

Selecting the appropriate safety glasses depends on understanding the specific hazards in your work

environment. Key factors to consider:

### 1. Identify the hazards:

- Flying debris or wood chips (saws, sanders)
- Dust or fine particles (sanding, milling)
- Chemical splashes (chemical handling, cleaning)
- UV exposure (outdoor work)
- Splash or spray risks (gluing, cleaning)

### 2. Verify certification:

- Ensure all glasses are marked with 'AS/NZS 1337.1' and the impact rating, such as 'I' for medium impact.
- Confirm that lenses and frames are certified for impact protection.

### 3. Choose the appropriate type:

- Standard medium-impact

**safety glasses:** Suitable for most general tasks like woodworking, machinery operation, and handling power tools. Looks like regular glasses but reinforced for safety.

- **Sealed (Gasketed) glasses:** Ideal for dusty environments or tasks involving fine dust, as they block particles and fumes.
- **Wraparound safety glasses:** Offer extended side protection, perfect for high debris or outdoor environments exposed to wind and dust.
- **Prescription safety goggles:** Provide full seal, ideal for chemical handling or splash risks.
- **Photochromic safety glasses:**

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Suitable for outdoor tasks where UV exposure varies, automatically darkening in sunlight.

- **Anti-fog and coated lenses:** Recommended for humid environments or prolonged use, preventing fogging and improving clarity.

#### 4. Comfort and fit:

- Ensure glasses fit well, especially for long shifts or tasks involving overhead work.
- Consider lightweight frames and adjustable features for maximum comfort.

#### 5. Use multiple options:

- For example, standard glasses for general work and goggles for chemical or splash tasks.

### WHY WEARING THE RIGHT GLASSES MATTERS

"Wearing non-compliant or inappropriate eyewear can lead to permanent eye injuries," warns Safety Officer Mark

Johnson. "Choosing certified, high-quality glasses from trusted brands not only ensures compliance but also provides peace of mind and maximum protection for your team."

Most Australian-made brands offer features like anti-fog coatings, UV protection, and prescription lenses designed for durability and comfort. Whether your workers are operating saws, handling chemicals, or working outdoors, selecting the correct, certified eyewear is a crucial step toward a safer workplace.

### TRUSTED BRANDS

Safety experts recommend business owners use trusted brands for peace of mind and maximum protection. Leading brands also offer a range of certified prescription safety glasses designed specifically for workplace hazards including:

- **Specsavers Corporate Safety Eyewear:** As one of Australia's largest providers, Specsavers

offers a broad selection of prescription safety glasses tested and certified to AS/NZS 1337.1. Their frames and lenses are suitable for general use, including bifocals and progressives, and are often incorporated into employer safety programs.

- **Eyres:** An Australian brand specialising in high-quality safety frames, tested to meet the AS/NZS 1337.1 standard, with prescription lenses supplied through a network of optometrists.

- **PSG Eyewear:** Focused solely on safety prescription eyewear, PSG offers a wide range of compliant frames and lens options through optical clinics and corporate safety programs.

- **Bollé Safety (Rx Range):** The French brand is renowned for comfort, style, and safety. Their prescription safety frames are popular in mining, engineering, and industrial sectors, with lenses custom-

made through partnered optometrists.

- **Uvex Prescription Safety Eyewear:** Designed in Germany, Uvex offers ergonomic frames that meet Australian standards, ideal for high-performance environments requiring durability and comfort.
- **Hoya Safety Eyewear:** Known for premium lenses with excellent coatings, Hoya collaborates with Australian optometrists to supply custom prescription safety glasses suited for trades and technical roles.

If you don't require your safety glasses to hold prescription lenses, then make sure to check out The Workwear Store currently offering a discount on their safety PPE (use code: TIMBER10). The Workwear Store is an Australian company that specialises in providing safety PPE, premium workwear essentials, and more.



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# The Family Business Association hosts awards night

## Recognising excellence in family business across Australia and NZ.

THE Family Business Excellence Awards celebrated its most outstanding contributors at the 2025 Family Business Conference: Asia-Pacific this week hosted by Family Business Association.

### Emerging Leader in Family Business Award

Jordana Ashcroft O'Sullivan from Fore Design + Flex Planning won the coveted Emerging Leader in Family Business Award. Jordana Ashcroft O'Sullivan is the General Manager of Fore Design + Flex Planning a second-generation family business operating in commercial and residential design and town planning. Ashcroft O'Sullivan has spearheaded strategic growth, modernised operations and has a focus on strong organisational culture. Under her leadership the company has grown its market presence and embraced cutting-edge technology.

"My parents offered me a new role in Beyond Ink that hadn't previously existed as I was looking to move out of my town planning role into a more suitable environment. At the beginning there were only three staff, 10 years later we're now a dynamic team of 15," said Ashcroft O'Sullivan.

"We've recently become Fore Design and launched Flex Planning as a standalone planning practice. This growth is made possible with our strong framework that allows



us to be competitive in our industry and remain ready for the next stage of growth.

"I'm fortunate to say that I have a job and a team that I love," concluded Ashcroft O'Sullivan.

### Family Business of the Year 2025 and Established Family Business Award

Sustainability, family values and a customer-first approach led DECO to the win amongst strong competition. DECO Australia is a second-generation family business operating in the building industry. Meika Doonan, Director of Strategy & Governance of DECO accepted the awards saying the company had tripled its size in only six years and made it through many ups and downs over its history.



"My dad, Ross, started the business 21 years ago, his vision was simple and powerful, 'imagine what a business could achieve because it actually cared about its customers' and that's the philosophy that we live by.

"We've built something that we're all incredibly proud of, and like all family businesses, the blood, sweat and tears is real.

"This award means so much to us, not just as a moment of recognition, but reassurance that we're on the right path," said Doonan.

### Founder's Family Business Award

It started with one man and a truck, and a big dream. Peter and Sally-Ann Eather are the founders of Eather Group, an ISO-accredited and Supply



1/ DECO Australia won the Family Business of the Year 2025 and Established Family Business awards.

2/ Eather Group, champions of 'Care for Country' business wins Founder's Family Business Award.

3/ Amanda Challen, Advance Civil Engineering Northern Territory wins Leading Woman in Family Business Award.

4/ Jordana Ashcroft O'Sullivan from Fore Design + Flex Planning wins coveted Emerging Leader in Family Business Award. All photos: courtesy Family Business Association

Nation-certified Indigenous family business, dedicated to driving a Circular Economy in the infrastructure sector. The Eather Group are the champions of the 'Care for Country' business and that ethos has served them well.

Peter Eather spoke of the early days when the couple had \$10,000 and big aspirations.

"About 15 years ago we had big dreams to provide opportunities for our family and community. Boy has it been a wild ride.

"We implemented the three C's: Caring for Country, Caring for Culture and Caring for Community. Putting these concepts in place, has meant we are able to do the things we do.

"We are building a



From P 10

sustainable future for us and our beautiful daughter," said Eather.

### Leading Woman in Family Business Award

Amanda Challen is a Pioneer of Women's Leadership in Construction. As the Director and Company Secretary of Advance Civil Engineering, Challen is a trailblazer for women in construction. Challen has transformed her business through innovation, strengthening governance and embracing technology including satellite communication and drones.

As the first woman on the Civil Contractors Federation NT board and a founding member of the Women in Civil Committee, she has championed gender diversity and industry change. Her contributions have been widely recognised and has earned her a place among

Australia's Top 100 Women in Construction.

Amanda Challen said: "Winning this award feels a bit surreal, because I've spent far more time getting things done than taking credit for it.

"This award says that women in family business matter. Our voices matter, and our work, often behind the scenes, keeps the wheels turning and the books balanced.

"Thank you for shining a light on the people who make the world go round, quietly, competently and also often cooking dinner.

"Family Business is rewarding, relentless, messy, magnificent and absolutely impossible to explain.

"What keeps us going is a sense of purpose, a shared DNA - literally and metaphorically - and the people around us who make it all possible," said Challen.

These awards underscore



**Catherine Sayer, CEO, Family Business Association.**

the vital role that family-run enterprises play across Australia and New Zealand, highlighting their significant innovation, economic, social, and cultural impacts.

With family businesses representing 70% of all businesses in Australia and providing approximately 50% of the nation's workforce with a job, they span the spectrum from small local shops to large multinational operations, demonstrating the diversity

and strength of family entrepreneurship in the region.

Catherine Sayer, CEO of the Family Business Association (FBA), the peak body behind the awards, said the organisation is committed to championing the achievements of these vital organisations and their leaders from across Australia and New Zealand.

"Family businesses are the heart of Australia's economy and social fabric. These awards celebrate not only their achievements but also the enduring spirit of entrepreneurship, resilience, and community that family businesses embody.

"They deserve this recognition as they are a key part of our economy and way of life," said Sayer.

Submissions for the 2025/2026 Family Business Excellence Awards are now open. Click here for more information.

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Image: AKD



# A vision for resilience

## Transforming Pacific agriculture and forestry.

THIS week, Nuku'alofa, Tonga, hosts the 2025 Pacific Week of Agriculture and Forestry (PWAf), drawing ministers and heads of agriculture and forestry departments from 22 Pacific nations. Held from May 26 to 30, the event marks a critical moment for charting the future of the region's agricultural and forestry sectors under the theme 'Transform Agriculture & Forestry: More Regeneration, More Productivity, More Resilience'. This gathering underscores the urgent need to address climate change, food security, and economic sustainability in the face of growing environmental and social challenges.

The Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR) has been a steadfast supporter of PWAf since its inception in 2017, fostering collaboration between Australian and Pacific researchers. ACIAR CEO Professor Wendy Umberger highlights the importance of this partnership, noting, "By strengthening collaborative efforts, we ensure research meets immediate needs while laying foundations for long-term sustainable development." This includes targeted investments in climate-resilient livelihoods, biosecurity, and integrated food systems, alongside support for community-based fisheries management and improved nutrition through initiatives like the



**The ACIAR-supported plant health clinic network including country partner, Tonga Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Forests, at their side event during the 2025 Pacific Week of Agriculture and Forestry..** Image: ACIAR



**4TH PACIFIC WEEK OF AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY**  
**'Transforming Agriculture and Forestry'**  
 MORE: REGENERATION | PRODUCTIVITY | RESILIENCE  
 NUKUALOFA, TONGA, 2025

CGIAR Island Food Systems program. These efforts aim to bolster resilient food production and enhance access to indigenous foods, critical in fragile and conflict-affected regions.

PWAf serves as a platform for high-level dialogue, centred around the 9th Regional Meeting of the Pacific Heads of Agriculture and Forestry Services and the Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) / Secretariat Pacific Community (SPC) Joint Agriculture and Forestry Ministerial Meeting. Complementing these discussions are 29 side events, tackling pressing issues such as climate change adaptation, soil health, genetic biodiversity of crops, forestry management, livestock, ecology, organics,

and environmental sustainability. These sessions, led by Pacific partners, allow for setting future priorities and guiding organisations like ACIAR in aligning their support with regional needs.

A notable focus this year is the empowerment of local leadership and expertise. Women leaders, including Ms Mele Sisi Finefeuiaki from Tonga's Lotopoha Export Trading, Mrs Lucy Judina Duburiya from Nauru, and Ms Chelsa Muña from Guam, are actively shaping the agenda, sharing insights on agribusiness and environmental management. Their participation reflects a growing recognition of diverse perspectives in driving innovation. Additionally, ACIAR will engage with Pacific graduates of its scholarship

programs, fostering a new generation of agricultural leaders to address region-specific challenges.

Tonga's hosting of PWAf is particularly significant given its agricultural context. With 75% of its population relying on rural livelihoods and agriculture contributing 16% to its GDP, the kingdom faces pressures from climate hazards and limited arable land. The event's theme resonates with Tonga's needs, promoting regeneration through sustainable practices like agroforestry and soil conservation, which are vital for resilience against rising sea levels and cyclones. ACIAR's investments, exceeding A\$18 million across eight Pacific nations in 2024-25, support these goals, enhancing productivity through advanced research and technology transfer.

The week's trade displays and side events, such as those on biosecurity and market access, highlight practical solutions, from pest management to value-added processing. This collaborative approach not only strengthens regional ties but also positions the Pacific as a leader in sustainable agriculture. As Pacific leaders deliberate, the outcomes of PWAf 2025 could set a precedent for global agricultural innovation, ensuring a resilient future for the region's communities and ecosystems.

For more details, [click here](#).



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# Komatsu Forest's PC Xtreme Series

OVER recent years Komatsu Forest has worked closely with the Komatsu Osaka Factory to develop the Xtreme Series excavators with unique forest specifications for forestry application. This collaboration has resulted in over a dozen cost-effective configurations of the PC270-8, PC300-8, PC350-8 and PC400-8 models which cover most aspects of today's Australian and New Zealand logging operations. Note following forestry modifications:

**High/Wide Undercarriage:** The 3.5m wide track frame, designed by the Osaka factory, offers 850mm of ground clearance. The frame is equipped with full-length track skies, reinforced idlers, and heavy-duty guarding

throughout for enhanced durability.

**Forest Safety Cab:** The cabin was originally developed for Komatsu North America where it was utilised for their Log Loaders in the forestry industry. This purpose-built forestry cabin has been through a full destruction test and meets the required forestry cabin ratings of ISO 8082-2 ROPS, 8083 FOPS, 8084 OPS.

**Special Forest Booms:** The Working Gear (WG) boom sets were developed by the Osaka factory with the boom tip designed to accept any directional head. The plumbing on the WG booms has been designed with SAE flanges to ensure ease of installation and the booms are fitted with 500-hour bushes.

**Heavy Duty Cooling Package (AKG):** The standard Komatsu cooler package is replaced by a purpose-built forestry cooler package from AKG, one of the largest global suppliers. The open fin core is the key to this cooler design being 7 fins per inch. This package is offered in several models, and it comes standard with an automated hydraulic reversing fan.

**Auxiliary Hydraulic Cooler:** An additional hydraulic cooler is fitted in place of the AKG cooler package for medium applications where the standard Komatsu cooler is retained. The additional hydraulic cooler provides increased capacity for harvester/processor applications. It comes standard with an automated hydraulic reversing fan.

**IQAN Control Valve (Optional):** The IQAN system manages the diesel engine and hydraulic pump output while providing fully proportional electronic crane controls. It controls all the crane functions including the rotator and slew functions which allows the machine to optimise engine and hydraulic pump flows providing reduced fuel consumption down to 20 litres per hour (PC300HW).

Brett Jones, MD of Komatsu Forest P/L, explained the close collaboration with Komatsu Ltd's Osaka factory has aided the delivery of the new Xtreme Series, a real alternative to purpose-built track machines.

## Komatsu

## PC270HW



Komatsu Forest has been synonymous with sustainable forestry innovations for logging solutions in Australia since 1991.

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Komatsu Forest Pty Ltd  
11/4 Avenue of Americas  
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E: info.au@komatsuforest.com





# So many gender jurisdictions!

## And now a new development in Qld.

By **PETER MAGUIRE**

AS people will be aware, there has been a huge amount of publicity on the subjects of sexual harassment and gender inequalities in recent times and there are significant changes that have happened or are about to happen in multiple jurisdictions.

In the past couple of years, we have seen new positive duties to eliminate or control risks associated with psychosocial hazards including sexual harassment and gender-based behaviours become operative in most States and Territories of Australia under Workplace Health and Safety laws.

There are a number of new jurisdictions at the Fair Work Commission (FWC), and they are also running a number of major cases on wage equality in particular industries and in relation to “work and care” looking at job security and life balance issues.

Since December 2023, the Australian Human Rights Commission has had compliance and enforcement powers whereby it can enter workplaces for inspections, interview staff and initiate prosecutions for breach of the Commonwealth “Sex Discrimination Act 1984”. And some Queensland specific changes have arrived.

Then there is the requirement for businesses with 100 or more employees to lodge an annual report with the Workplace Gender Equality Agency (WGEA). That has been around for a long time, but it has become much more significant a burden with the introduction of gender pay gap reporting last year.



**There have been some significant changes around gender jurisdiction and sexual harassment and discrimination over the past few years. As the changes continue to happen it is essential for businesses to ensure they are knowledgeable and compliant.** Image: Shutterstock

Plus, there are changes to Parental Leave Pay and related superannuation entitlements.

So, there is a lot to take in and hopefully, this summary of all of that will help you to get your head around the range of issues and obligations that you need to address.

### **Parental Leave Pay and superannuation**

Currently, the scheme provides 22 weeks' pay at the federal minimum wage to be shared between the parents. That increases to 24 weeks on 1 July 2025 and to 26 weeks on 1 July 2026.

Additionally, eligible parents with babies born or adopted on or after 1 July 2025 will receive an additional payment, based on the Superannuation Guarantee (12 per cent of their Paid Parental Leave payment), as a contribution to their nominated superannuation fund.

Note: this is all paid by the Commonwealth Government, not employers.

However, there is a strong expectation that employers will support equality in parenting in line with the shared entitlement

to leave.

The decision is of course really up to the parents.

### **New jurisdictions at the Fair Work Commission**

The FWC has been able to issue stop sexual harassment orders for some years, but it isn't a jurisdiction that saw a lot of activity for the simple reason that, unless the alleged perpetrator was still working in the organisation, there was essentially nothing to stop, and often cases could fail to result in any action on jurisdictional grounds.

If the alleged sexual harassment happened after 6 March 2023, the FWC can also conciliate on sexual harassment disputes and either issue a certificate to allow a court application to proceed or arbitrate itself and has powers to award compensation among other things.

There are also jurisdictions related to disputes over refusal to extend parental leave and around the right to disconnect which can have obvious relationships with family/parental responsibilities.

The FWC has also inserted

provisions on the right to disconnect and requests for flexible working arrangements in modern awards so that disputes on these matters can be dealt with under the dispute resolutions provisions in the awards.

### **Workplace Gender Equality Agency**

Organisations with 100 or more employees are required by law to lodge an annual report on their gender pay gap and the results are published on the WGEA website.

While less than 2% of Australian employers actually have that many employees, the principles of gender equality apply to all organisations. They are really important for organisations of all shapes and sizes to observe as good governance as well as in providing a positive employer offering to attract and retain good people.

Plus, while smaller organisations might not have an obligation to report, pay inequalities could result in sex discrimination complaints which can be made in multiple jurisdictions.

The positive duty to prevent sexual harassment, sexual discrimination and gender based behaviour

The Australian Human Rights Commission has published “A Resource for Small Business on the Positive Duty under the Sex Discrimination Act 1984 (Cth)”. You can access it on their website: [humanrights.gov.au](http://humanrights.gov.au).

There are similar resources for larger businesses on their other site: [respectwork.gov.au](http://respectwork.gov.au).



From P 14

These materials explain what the different forms of unlawful behaviour are and how they might manifest in workplaces – they are:

- Sex discrimination
- Sexual harassment
- Sex-based harassment
- Hostile workplace environment on the ground of sex

They also set out seven standards that need to be applied to be compliant with the positive duty. They are:

1. Leadership
2. Culture
3. Knowledge
4. Risk management
5. Support
6. Reporting and response
7. Monitoring, evaluation and transparency

Safe Work Australia has also published the Model Code of Practice: Sexual and gender-based harassment and most

States and Territories also have their own positive duties to prevent sexual harassment and related illegal behaviours via their own Workplace Health and Safety and Equal Opportunity/ Human Rights authorities.

### The Queensland development

From March 2025, if a risk has been identified employers must also implement a comprehensive, written prevention plan that identifies risks, control measures for managing these risks if elimination is not practicable and the process for consulting with employees during its development.

Employers will need to consider specific worker, workplace and work environment characteristics, such as lack of diversity or isolated work, which may heighten the risk of sexual harassment and sex or gendered-based harassment occurring in their workplace.

In essence, this means that

any business needs to conduct a risk assessment in line with regulations and the Code of Practice which sets out 9 steps to take:

1. Create a safe physical and online working environment
2. Create a positive and respectful workplace culture
3. Provide information and training on preventing sexual harassment
4. Talk to your workers
5. Implement safe work systems and procedures
6. Implement workplace policies
7. Address unwanted or offensive behaviour early
8. Quickly respond to reports of sexual harassment
9. Encourage workers to report

any sexual harassment

Then you need to develop a control plan on how each identified risk will be mitigated. This applies to all Persons Conducting a Business or Undertaking which has people working in Queensland.

### Conclusion

With duties in relation to the prevention of sexual harassment and the resolution of complaints across so many different jurisdictions, anyone in business really does need to have access to professional advice on what this all means in the context of their particular business and how the positive duty can best be met.

**Source: Timber Trader News**



*Peter Maguire is the owner and practice leader of Ridgeline HR, an award winning HRM consulting practice which he founded in 2000. Peter is an acknowledged expert in workplace relations compliance and a high-performance leadership coach with over 40 years' experience in HRM. Ridgeline HR's by-line is Helping PEOPLE in BUSINESS and that is essentially what Peter does – help business people with their people business.*



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# Home building rebounds but long-term challenges remain

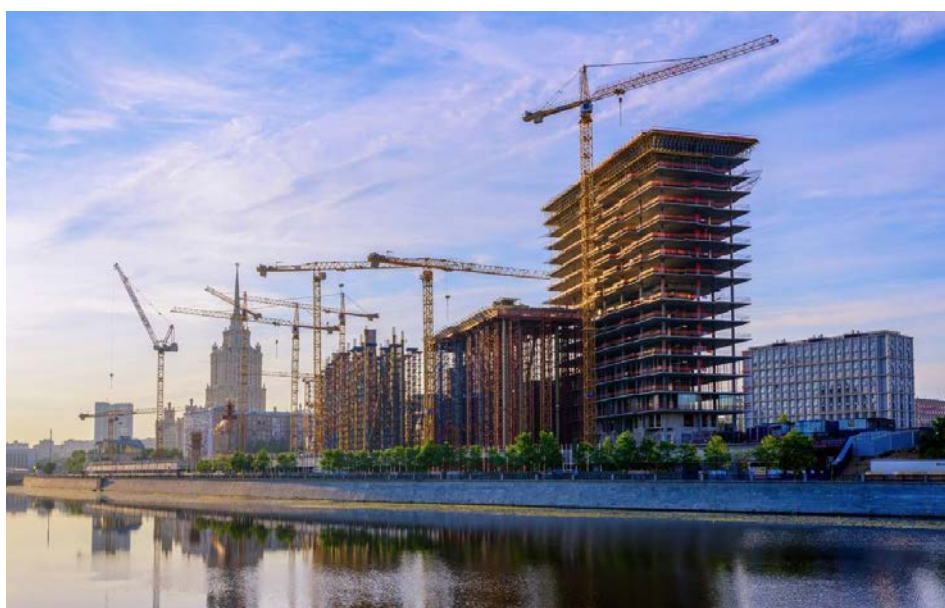
THE number of homes commencing construction in Australia is set to increase over the next few years, driven by strong population growth, low unemployment, and falling interest rates. However, long-term structural issues continue to pose risks to housing affordability and national supply targets, according to the latest outlook from the Housing Industry Association.

HIA Chief Economist Tim Reardon said the sector is showing signs of improved confidence following a period of weak activity, particularly in apartment construction.

"We expect new home commencements to increase steadily through the second half of the decade," said Mr Reardon.

"Detached house building will lead this recovery, peaking in 2027, with apartment construction set to follow as market conditions and policy settings improve."

Recent interest rate cuts and historically strong migration are adding to demand for new housing. But ongoing constraints including



**Detached home starts are expected to rise over the next few years while apartment building starts will take an extra couple of years before they climb.** Image: Shutterstock

land shortages, regulations and taxes are increasing the cost of construction and limiting supply. This will continue to drive up the cost of both renting and buying a home.

"The only way to close the growing gap between supply and demand is through meaningful reform—particularly at the state level."

The HIA report forecasts that home building will fall 20 per cent short of the Australian Government's target of 1.2 million new homes over the five years.

"We need to unlock land, streamline planning processes, and remove barriers to investment if we are to meet the housing needs of a growing population," Mr Reardon said.

"Australia has the capacity to deliver, but it will take a coordinated response from all three tiers of government to overcome these constraints."

While detached housing

is showing strong growth in Western Australia, South Australia, and Queensland, activity remains subdued in New South Wales and Victoria. Apartment construction is yet to recover from a collapse in foreign capital caused by punitive state taxes and is expected to rebuild gradually towards the end of the decade. This growth will be boosted by ongoing demand from migration and Olympic focused building in Brisbane.

"Housing demand is not going to decline with a rise in interest rates. It is continuing to grow along with the population. Structural reforms are needed now to shape affordability, economic opportunity and living standards for the next generation," concluded Mr Reardon.

## FORECASTS:

**Detached houses:** There were 26,880 detached houses that commenced construction in the December quarter 2024,

which brought the 2024 calendar year to 107,240 detached starts, up by 7.0 per cent compared to the previous year. This increase is expected to continue with a further 3.7 per cent in 2025 to 111,240, and 6.7 per cent increase 2026 to 118,660 and to a peak in 2027 of 120,910 starts. Detached starts are then expected to fall as the cost of land and rising borrowing

and construction costs see households shift demand to unit construction, seeing starts fall to 108,240 in 2030.

**Multi-unit dwellings:** There were 15,390 multi-unit dwellings that commenced construction in the December quarter 2024, which brought the 2024 calendar year to 60,940 multi-unit starts, the lowest in 13 years. This is expected to be the trough of this cycle with the number of multi-unit starts increasing to 68,850 in 2025. A further 9.6 per cent increase in 2026 will still see multi-unit commencements remain anaemically low at 75,450. From this point, capacity constraints should ease, while demand continues to exceed supply, resulting in an additional 13.0 per cent increase in starts in 2027 to 85,250. This expansion should continue and exceed 100,000 starts in 2029 for the first time since 2018. From this point, the increase in multi-unit starts will ease.

**“APARTMENT CONSTRUCTION IS YET TO RECOVER FROM A COLLAPSE IN FOREIGN CAPITAL**

# LIGNA 2025: A 50th year celebration of innovation

LIGNA 2025, the world's leading woodworking and timber processing trade fair, has kicked off with a bang in Hannover, Germany, marking its 50th anniversary with a vibrant showcase of innovation, sustainability, and craftsmanship. Held from 26 May, the event has drawn global professionals to explore cutting-edge technologies, sustainable practices, and inspiring designs shaping the future of the wood industry.

LIGNA 2025 is a massive event with 1,433 exhibitors across ten exhibition halls, two pavilions, and the open-air site. There are high-tech solutions spanning the entire value chain – from forestry and sawmill technology to mechanical and plant engineering and the skilled trades. With the inclusion of technology and sustainability that shapes the industry – digital transformation, resource efficiency, circular economy, and timber construction as key drivers – LIGNA is packed with amazing exhibitions.

Day one set the tone with a whirlwind of energy, as exhibitors and visitors connected over groundbreaking machinery and systems. Hall 26 is a must-visit, spotlighting the latest advancements in wood-based material production, from composite materials to auxiliary systems. The displays are a testament to the industry's push towards precision and efficiency, offering solutions that resonate with modern manufacturing demands.

Sustainability is a core theme at LIGNA 2025, with the LIGNA.Circular hub in

Hall 12 stealing the spotlight. This interactive space, featuring partners like VDMA and Fraunhofer WKI, dives deep into the circular economy, showcasing smart materials and sustainable practices. Visitors can engage with six themed islands and attend daily talks at the LIGNA.Stage, where experts unpack circular value creation. It's a hands-on, forward-thinking experience that's inspiring greener approaches to woodworking.

The event also celebrates craftsmanship, with Carpenter Day being a standout. Kicking off with a guided tour and the iconic "Zimmererklatsch" clap by 75 master carpentry students from Hesse, the day culminated in the prestigious German Timber Construction Award ceremony. This award honours innovative timber buildings that prioritise renewable materials, setting new benchmarks in design and construction. Meanwhile, the "Die Gute Form 2025" exhibition opening showcased stunning journeyman pieces, sparking inspiration for aspiring craftspeople.

LIGNA 2025 isn't just about work—there's fun to be had too.



1/ The "Zimmererklatsch" is an iconic carpentry clap that was performed by 75 master carpentry students from Hesse.

2/ Circularity takes the spotlight as the global focus on sustainability and by-product use grows. Images: LIGNA

The LIGNA.TruckStop Happy Hour, sponsored by HOMAG, offers beer, bratwurst, and great conversation, fostering a relaxed vibe for networking. With its blend of innovation, sustainability, and community, LIGNA 2025 is proving to be a pivotal event for the global woodworking industry, driving progress and connection in equal measure.



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## HEAD OFFICE

Timber Media Australasia Pty Ltd  
PO Box 3001  
Maraylya NSW 2765

## PUBLISHER

Timber Media Australasia Pty Ltd

## EDITORS

Nicky Ainley  
Donyale Harrison  
Jess Hockridge  
editors@timberandforestryenews.com

## ADVERTISING

Campbell McInnes // +61 (0) 406 223 007  
campbellm@timberandforestryenews.com

## ACCOUNTS

Chris Parker // +61 (0) 413 710 203  
cparker@ttnews.com.au

## SUBSCRIBE

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### CONTACTS

**Media releases and editorial:**

Nicky Ainley // Donyale Harrison // Jessica Hockridge  
e: [editors@timberandforestrynews.com](mailto:editors@timberandforestrynews.com)

**Display ad bookings:**

Campbell McInnes // e: [campbellm@timberandforestrynews.com](mailto:campbellm@timberandforestrynews.com)

**Accounts:**

Chris Parker // e: [cparker@ttnews.com.au](mailto:cparker@ttnews.com.au)

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